**Appendix H: Reflections of Course-based Embedded Assignments Jose Vasquez**



**Lamar University – M.Ed. in Educational Technology Leadership**

## Reflections of Course-based Embedded Assignments

***Directions:*** In submitting your Course-based Embedded Assignment located in Appendix I of the Internship Handbook, you are required to complete a reflection of the identified assignments in your course wiki/e-portfolio. These reflections will be used to assist you in completing your EDLD 5388/5370 (\*Please note that course number changes in Fall 2010\*) Internship comprehensive exam final report. Students should use and cite their textbook references as well as two additional references when writing each reflection. The reflection must consist of statements regarding the knowledge you gained from the assignment and how the assignment helped you master the Technology Facilitator Standard(s) /Indicator(s).

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| Course Number: | Course Name: | Course-based Embedded Hours(see Appendix I) |
| **EDLD 5345** | **Human Resource Management** | **10 Hours** |

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| Description of theAssignment/Performance Tasks(see Appendix I) | A. Student will have the opportunity to interview leaders on campus regarding technology integration and instructional leadership and make personal evaluations about how technology has made a presence in human resource management and professional development. |
| * The knowledge you gained from the assignment. (2 points) * The relation of new information to Technology Facilitator Standards and Performance Indicators (2 points). * The relation of information gained to personal experience. (2 points) * Discussion at a critical level, not just recitation of facts. Discussion at a critical level means discussing things such as your opinion of the reading or experience, why you hold that onion, what you see wrong with the reading or experience, how you see the reading or experience is consistent or inconsistent with what you have learned so far, implications for the future, (4 ) * Insights into the patterns of interactions of colleagues.(2 points) * Group processes including: who had power, authority, or influence; who was participating and who was not, who was not included, how did you or another leader draw the silent participants out; was there confrontation, conflict, consensus, agreement, hurt feelings? (2 points) * Notations addressing the affective or feeling tone evident, concerns you noticed. (2 points) * Questions you have that you should research or about which you can seek expert advice from your campus-based supervisor or your professor. (2 points) * Issues that puzzle you. (2 points) | Technology has played an integral role in human resources and personnel management in the last few years. Mercedes ISD’s application system has been outsourced to our local regional service center. According to the latest K-12 Horizon Report (2011), reports show that “now schools are looking to outsource significant parts of their infrastructure, such as email and backups, to cloud providers (p. 6). Our district has done just that and it has worked out very well for our human resources department. According to Mr. Rodriguez, assistant principal and Mrs. Badillo, human resource manager, the new system is much more versatile than our old district system. A job posting will appear on our district website but applicants get hyperlinked to Region One ONEAPP. I learned that the service is hosted through Region One service center however human resources personnel, campus principals and other appropriate personnel can access the applicant’s resume and application details. In our old system, principals had to rely on human resource clerks to get information faxed or emailed. It seems appropriate that this week we had the opportunity to review a very important implication of technology, privacy and student records. Although we are dealing with employee information instead of student information, it must be handled and dealt with the highest form of security measures as possible. A good secure method of transmitting data includes the use of “firewalls, encryption, user authentication, network monitoring, and restricted access to server rooms” (Williamson & Redish, 2009, p. 128). The ONEAPP system utilizes at least 3 of those security measures mentioned. I think the old method of faxing delicate information to principals and other administrators was a sure way for information to land in the wrong hands. In addition to being highly secure, the new system we currently have in place is very cost effective and stable. Unfortunately, I learned that the Region One ONEAPP system also allows applicants to see other district job postings, which may be routing highly qualified applicants to other local districts. Nonetheless, in terms of cost effectiveness, this is a great idea because the service is not network intensive since it is web based compared to the server hogging old method. I think our district had the right idea of outsourcing this service to save on costs however it should consider using another company that does not list other surrounding districts in their application. I just feel that since we are competing for the highest talent, we cannot afford to lose potential talent to surrounding higher paying districts. Sometimes you cannot put a price on teacher talent!  Administrators and teachers use DMAC as a comparative analysis tool. DMAC has become one of the most important technology tools on our campus. Although I did not include this activity in my monthly activity reports, I did perform several campus DMAC trainings throughout the year. I trained teachers on how to retrieve data and create various types of charts on individual and class performance. Another way our district is using technology is through online communication tools such as email. Teachers can coordinate and communicate with other staff, parents and students using email through our Microsoft exchange server. I have installed school email on many of our teacher’s smartphones and tablets so they can have the latest school updates and data at the palm of their hand. Another tool used to communicate with parents regarding important dates, accomplishments, and events is through our district and campus web page. Our web page is filled with a lot of rich media including downloadable documents; videos, photos and links to help parents and the community stay connected to our district/campus life. I am in charge of my campus’ webpage and constantly strive to find new ideas to improve the feel and texture of our website. One major change I have made this last school year is the use of Photobucket on our webpage. As a technology coordinator I occasionally show up at school sporting events and functions to take photographs. I would receive an overwhelming amount of emails from parents asking for me to email them the photo of their child. With hundreds of pictures in my collection, this task was taking up a lot of my time. I started to upload all photos onto the school Photobucket page where I store and archive everything. I then publicized the Photobucket page and allowed any user to access all the photos at any time. Since then, the emails have stopped! This is one example of how web-based photo hosting (cloud service) has helped me personally and satisfied the parents.  Since the introduction of DMAC and Skyward to our district, there have been constant follow-up professional development trainings and updates to the two systems. District level Skyward training is conducted at least once a year while DMAC is done twice a year by our data analyst, Daniel Runnels. These trainings occur on the district level and are usually during staff development days. At my campus, many of the core subject teachers receive training on a web-based learning management system known as MySatori. They “say” this system has been proven to be very effective in reinforcing student learning. Teachers can pull reports on each individual user and determine areas of weakness. However, as I have mentioned before, this program is nothing more than a TAKS aligned drill and kill programs to help with interventions rather than to help student solve problems or be creative. According to an online blog about drill and skill programs, “endless research has proven, drilling kids for tests doesn’t result in significant test score improvement, and has negative long-term results in what students actually retain” (Martinez, 2009). On the other hand, an exciting area of professional development and training has been on tablet devices. Administrators received training on Apple’s iPad table to conduct walkthroughs and observations. I have personally trained teachers on how to use iPads in the classroom in many instances throughout the year. Our district recently purchased 450 additional Apple iPads to be distributed to all campuses. Our After Centers for Education (ACE) and migrant program have also purchased a large quantity of iPads for student use. As a result, I foresee multiple iPad trainings occurring this upcoming school year. Just today my campus finally received the Bretford mobility iPad cart that allows us to synch and charge up to 30 devices. This is exciting news on a personal level because previously I had to synch each device individually, which took a period of two days to complete. Now with the cart and the iCloud service on iOS 5, this daunting task is the thing of the past!  As technology becomes more commonly used in education, educators and administrators will need appropriate training and professional development to help keep up with the trends. Currently, I feel that we introduce too many programs and expect teachers to learn on their own. Our district needs to conduct a higher frequency of trainings at flexible times that meet our teacher and administrators needs. I still don’t understand why our district does not use distance learning communication tools such as WebEx or Adobe Connect to help meet the needs of our educators? We have the infrastructure and talent to make it happen, we just need people in position willing to take risks for the sake of our educators. Since most of the applications and systems that we use are created by external organizations, we should allow our teachers and administrators to brainstorm and make suggestions to these companies on how to improve their products to best meet our district needs. For example, I feel that the Region One ONEAPP needs significant improvement. There is no two-way communication or feedback for applicants. The system should send messages to users about acknowledgement of applicant, position-filled, or a process status update. It should resemble what we all have been accustomed to when we track a package with UPS. Another area of concern is our Skyward Employee Access system. I suggest that this system, which is designed for personnel information such as W-2, employee time off and payroll, be revamped in a way that allows more user interaction. Simply put, Employee Access is very limited and does not allow users to update or input information. We need to collaborate on ways to fix or improve current technology tools related to human resource development and professional development.  Sources:  Martinez, S. (2009, March 24). Educational Technology Doesn’t Work? Generation YES Blog. *Generation YES Blog*. Retrieved October 20, 2011, from http://blog.genyes.org/index.php/2009/03/24/educational-technology-doesnt-work/  NMC Horizon Report 2011 K-12 Edition | The New Media Consortium. (n.d.). *The New Media Consortium | Sparking innovation, learning and creativity.* Retrieved October 11, 2011, from http://www.nmc.org/publications/horizon-report-2011-k-12-edition.  Williamson, J., & Redish, T. (2009). *ISTE's technology facilitation and leadership standards: what every K-12 leader should know and be able to do*. Eugene,OR: International Society for Technology in Education. |